

Jayanti / Is It Jubilating Over Our Jubilees?

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We give below a complete four-poya-day calendar for 2006. We shall tell you why. Since there is at the moment a sporadic stir in the country about a 2550 Buddha Jayanti year, and the State and the joint body of monks and laymen of the land are competitively struggling to display their exuberance, why not the Sri Lankan Buddhists awaken to the fact that they have had an unbroken Buddhist impact on their religious and cultural lives for over twenty-three centuries. Do we not need to reflect it in our lives these days?

During this long period of history, we have authoritatively learnt that we have had devastating incursions from neighbouring countries. But our honest and patriotic Buddhist leadership during those days of yore, having sprung out of our own land and with their sincerity and courage, effectively punished the invader and restored peace and prosperity in the land. In the more recent centuries, colonial expansionist plunderers of the western world, one wave after another, invaded our country and looted and plundered and jealously destroyed everything that was culturally invaluable to us. The colonial heritage on us has been more baneful, disastrous and devastating than opium in China. But we still keep slavishly paying tribute to them through the stupidity that has been injected into us at all levels.

The best imaginable form of celebration or Buddha Jayanti we can host in this country is to plan a gradual restoration in our land of the glorious human culture or culture of man Buddhism has given to the world. The first is the Buddhist respect for all life, man and bird and beast, i.e. *panatipata veramani*. The saner world today, irrespective of religious differences, frowns upon the destruction of any form of life, for any purpose - for food, wearing apparel like skins and furs or animal oils and fats. This should also reckon with the large-

scale destruction of human life for the sake of establishing ethnic, religious and political supremacies.

The Poya days are for all Buddhists to enhance and upgrade the religiousness in their lives, at least four times a month. This is the one and only way to train for Buddhist Olympics to reach the goal of Nirvana, to win a gold and nothing less than that. A quarter in the lunar calendar, i.e. the days of the Poya given here, is the smallest unit on which to start with. The weekly observance of Sundays and Fridays in other religions is not more nor less than this.

Familiarise yourself with these days and plan to strictly observe a vegetarian day and a fasting night in your home on the days of the Poya, once every quarter. Banners and drums at state level will just not do.

Plan from now and continue your first phase of trial up to Vesak Full Moon. We thank you for your co-operation and wish you luck in this courageous religious regeneration, for your good here and hereafter.